



**THE LEGISLATURE
State of Hawaii**

NEWS RELEASE

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**HAWAII MEDAL OF HONOR PRESENTED TO FAMILIES
OF FALLEN WAR HEROES**

Honolulu. In a special and rare joint session of the Hawaii State Senate and the Hawaii House of Representatives, the legislature gathered today to unveil and present the Hawaii Medal of Honor to the families of Hawaii's fallen war heroes.

In 2005, the legislature passed House Bill 8, designated as Act 21. The measure provides for "a Hawaii Medal of Honor that would help express the deep appreciation and gratitude of the People of Hawaii to the loved ones of members of the military who sacrificed their lives in defense of our nation and its freedoms." A planning committee chaired by Representative Ken Ito, Major General Robert Lee and Senator Norman Sakamoto met during the interim to design and create the medal and to coordinate today's ceremony.

This morning, the Hawaii Medal of Honor was presented for the first time to 120 recipients, represented by 49 families, some of whom traveled to Hawaii from the mainland to participate in the ceremony.

"We wanted to show our deepest gratitude and respect to the families, friends and loved ones of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our country, " said Representative K. Mark Takai. "While there is much debate for and against the Iraq war, there is no debate about the tremendous sacrifices made by our service members and their families."

Recipients of the medal include members of the United Armed Forces, the United States Military Reserves, and the Hawaii National Guard who were either residents of the State of Hawaii, attended an educational institution in Hawaii, or were stationed in Hawaii by order of the United States Department of Defense.

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Speaker of the House, Calvin K.Y. Say, called the joint session to order, followed by the Posting of the Colors by the Joint Service Color Guard and the Hawaii Air National Guard – Royal Guard. Former Miss Hawaii Traci Toguchi performed the National Anthem and Hawai'i Pono'i.

After the Speaker's welcoming remarks, Governor Linda Lingle offered the Governor's Message, followed by the Military Address by Major General Robert G.F. Lee.

The medals were then presented to family members and representatives by Governor Lingle, Senate President Robert Bunda, Speaker Say and General Lee. The recipients, who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, were listed by date of death from March 29, 2003 to February 9, 2006. For those who were not able to attend, General Lee has arranged with other adjutant generals across the country to have the medals delivered personally to family members.

"The Hawaii Medal of Honor will have a special place in our home," said Theresa Inouye, in remembrance of her son, Sergeant Deyson K. Cariaga.

Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to each recipient by Senator Norman Sakamoto and Representative Ken Ito.

The United States Air Force performed a 21-Gun Salute and Taps, followed by a moment of silence, closing remarks by Senate President Bunda, and the Retiring of the Colors.

Family members, members of Hawaii's military community, and special guests joined lawmakers for a luncheon at the capitol following the event.

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